

CLAIMS:

1. A video signal enhancement unit (100) comprising:
- a pixel counter (104) for generating a count of pixels representative of the number of pixels that occur within a predetermined period of time and which have video signal levels that are higher than a predetermined video level, and
5 - a processing unit (102) for modifying contrast of the video signal in dependence on the count of pixels, characterized in that the predetermined period of time, during which the count of pixels is determined, is a number of times shorter than one video field interval.

10 2. A video signal enhancement unit (100) as claimed in claim 1, characterized in comprising:
- a contrast counter (112) designed to provide control input for the processing unit (102) and for storing a contrast count that is decreased each time the count of pixels exceeds a predefined threshold; and connected to the contrast counter (112)
15 - a trigger means (114) designed to generate a pulse, resulting in an increase of the contrast count.

20 3. A video signal enhancement unit (100) as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the trigger means (114) is arranged to generate the pulse every video field.

25 4. A video signal enhancement unit (100) as claimed in claim 2, characterized in further comprising a second pixel counter for generating a second count of pixels representative of a second number of pixels that occur within a second predetermined period of time and which have video signal levels that are higher than a second predetermined video level, and characterized in that the trigger means (114) is arranged to generate the pulse if on a predetermined moment of time, the second count of pixels is less than a second predefined threshold.

5. A video signal enhancement unit (100) as claimed in claim 2, characterized in comprising, coupled to the contrast counter (112), a contrast comparator (116) able to limit the contrast count to a maximum contrast value.

5 6. A video signal enhancement unit (100) as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the maximum contrast value is controllable.

7. A video signal enhancement unit (100) as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the contrast comparator (116) is able to control the trigger means (114) to stop generating pulses when the contrast count has reached the maximum contrast value.

10 8. An image display apparatus (200) provided with:

- receiving means (202) for receiving a video signal;
- a display device (206) for displaying images represented by the video signal;

15 and

- a video signal enhancement unit (100) comprising:

16 * a pixel counter (104) for generating a count of pixels representative of the number of pixels that occur within a predetermined period of time and which have video signal levels that are higher than a predetermined video level, and

20 * a processing unit (102) for modifying contrast of the video signal in dependence on the pixel count, characterized in that the predetermined period of time, during which the count of pixels is determined is a number of times shorter than one video field interval.

25 9. An image display apparatus (200) as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the video signal enhancement unit (100) comprises a trigger means (114) and a contrast counter (112) designed to provide control input for the processing unit (102) and for storing a contrast count that is decreased each time the count of pixels exceeds a predefined threshold, and that is increased each time the trigger means (114) generates a pulse.

30 10. An image display apparatus (200) as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the trigger means (114) is arranged to generate a pulse every video field.

11. An image display apparatus (200) as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the video signal enhancement unit (100) comprises, coupled to the contrast counter (112), a contrast comparator (116) able to limit the contrast count to a maximum contrast value.

5 12. A method of video signal enhancement comprising:

- a first step to generate a count of pixels representative of the number of pixels that occur within a predetermined period of time and which have video signal levels that are higher than a predetermined video level; and

- a second step to modify contrast of the video signal in dependence on the

10 count of pixels, characterized in that the predetermined period of time, during which the count of pixels is determined, is a number of times shorter than one video field interval.